

who strove to stem the tide of the new culture, was quickened into imprudent expression by an irrepressible tendency to speak his mind freely whenever an opponent crossed his path. From the period of his student days at Toulouse to the tragic finale on the Place Maubert at Paris his career was in truth one long polemic. He fearlessly shot the shafts of his sarcasm and his indignation against all and sundry who excited his scorn or his hatred. Now he is found belabouring some obscurantist pedant like the Syndic of the Sorborme, Noel Beda, or the Inquisitor-General at Toulouse, Mathieu Orry; now pouring out a rich vocabulary of abuse, in the manner of the age, on Erasmus in defence of his divine Cicero ; now defending himself, in equally choice Latin Billingsgate, against the scurrilities of Julius Csesar Scaliger, whom he had offended by presuming to vindicate Cicero against Erasmus, after that paragon of scholarly vanity had already done so. Of many such encounters was he the hero in an age which scholars and men of letters made a hell for themselves by their quarrelsomeness, their vanity, their pettiness, their touchiness. The polemics of a Scaliger against a Dolet, of a Dolet against an Erasmus, of a Florid us against a Dolet, would have blistered the soul of Job himself. Personal vilification by rival scholars was simply a fine art, and Dolet was certainly as great a proficient in the art as any of the *genus irritabile* of his time. No men ever understood better the business of making enemies of those who should have been friends than these sixteenth-century scholars. Dolet seems to have been one of the most touchy, provocative, and impulsive of the learned fraternity of his day, but along with this failing he combined a courage and a downrightness of style, as the protagonist of liberty of thought against the persecuting obscurantists of the age, that entitle him to the admiration of posterity. Even Luther did not indulge in more forcible language in denouncing a persecuting hierarchy than did Dolet in vindicating intellectual freedom against the bigots of the Toulouse Inquisition and the Sorbonne. These prejudiced bigots had a trick of identifying the new learning with heresy, and under this flimsy pretext they succeeded in hounding Dolet out of Toulouse. Before he went he gave vent, in an oration to his fellow-students, to a passionate out-